Forgotten Winters

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Forgotten Winters

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Will wasn't sure he'd ever see Hannibal again.

“H-Hannibal?” Will frowned as he spoke tentatively. Could it really be?

Will blinked and stood watching as the grey haired man smiled at the next child in line to approach him.

Will rarely came to the mall. There was something about it that made him feel sad, frustrated. A little lost. Especially this time of year, full of toys and gifts and decorations. He wouldn’t have come at all had he not just started dating a woman with a young son and it seemed gifts would be appropriate. Molly was nice enough, a good option if he was going to attempt to integrate finally. Even if it wasn’t really real, not like how things had been before. How they had been with Hannibal.

It hurt his heart to recall those long distant memories. Another lifetime now, but one that remained deeply ingrained within him. The memories alive and painful.

And there in front of him was the reason it had all come to an end.

Hannibal Lecter had been chosen personally by Nicholas, as was tradition. And for years he had done his job so well. Until the night he had not come back. Had not returned to his job and duty, to Will.

Will drew in a shaky breath, drinking in the sight of the mall santa. His hair hadn’t been grey when last Will saw him, and the beard was new too. He looked every inch as a santa should. The thought brought a whimper up into his throat.

Will shook his head, trying to compose himself. There was no way to say something now, not with a queue of children waiting to tell Santa their wishes and dreams. He took in another, deep breath and let it out slowly as he turned away.

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Hours later, Will waited outside the mall’s staff exit, nursing a takeaway coffee that had been cold for quite a while. Finally, after many of the stragglers had left, he came out. He was dressed in regular clothes now and not the bright red that, to Will, felt like something of a mockery of the real thing.

Hannibal didn't so much as glance at him as he walked by, until Will reached out and placed a hand on his arm and called him by name.

Hannibal stopped and looked at him questioningly, smile still in place. "Do I know you?"

Will let out a breath, struck by the beautiful face he remembered now seeing it up close again. There was definitely no denying this was Hannibal Lecter.

"I thought you did. You knew me better than anyone." Will muttered quietly, at which Hannibal cocked his head and gave a curious look.

"I'm sorry, I don't-" Hannibal started and then cut himself off with a sigh. "I had an accident a few years ago and suffered some long term memory damage, I'm sorry if we-"

"Dammit," Will swore under his breath. "I thought you were dead. We all did. You just disappeared, no sign of the sleigh or anything."

At those words Hannibal stepped back, clearly putting the distance between them as he narrowed his eyes.

"I don't appreciate whatever this is that you're doing. Is this a joke?" Hannibal growled in a way that Will remembered, a way that made him shiver. "Who are you?"

Will closed the space between them, unwilling and unable to be separated any further. "The man you love." He muttered, cupping Hannibal's cheek.

Hannibal's eyes went wide but he said nothing, just gazed back at Will.

"I know you, Hannibal. I need you to know me." Will practically begged. It had been so many years of fighting and holding back before they had admitted their feelings for each other. He couldn't go through that again, he couldn't have Hannibal not see him.

"I don't remember," Hannibal replied softly, lament in his tone.

"We hated each other as children," Will started, a soft chuckle at the memory. "But over the years… When we finally became lovers it was as though the world tilted on its axis and would never be the same again. We loved each other for such a long time, too long for you not to remember. Please Hannibal." Will felt the sting of tears in his eyes.

"I don't… I woke up here one day, in this town. I could only remember my name and that I was not from here. For so long I hoped someone would give me answers, but then I just had to accept my fate and try to build a life." Hannibal replied, shaking his head.

"Fuck I… I'm so sorry. I'm sorry I didn't find you sooner. We looked. For years I searched, until I had to accept that my old life, my life with you, was over. I have been living with the humans ever since. Not able to face that magical place we had created together, not without you."

"Years…" Hannibal muttered, though it didn't seem to be a question. And Will could understand that. Here Hannibal had aged as a human might, but the centuries that had come

before in their magical world beneath the northern lights had barely added lines to his face.

“Years. Decades. Centuries. We have loved each other forever, please remember that.” Will begged.

“I don’t… I’m sorry. I don’t. I wish-” Hannibal looked pained. Though it was nothing to the tumult that Will felt. As though every cell in his body might expire.

With a sob, Will pitched forward and pressed his mouth to Hannibal’s. He had to. Everything inside him told him that he had to kiss the love of his life, even if it was just that one last time before he finally succumbed to the inevitability of a human life.

It started chaste, but then Hannibal opened to him. And the next thing Will knew, he was in Hannibal’s arms and being kissed as thoroughly as the night they had been wed. The memory made him whimper, which prompted Hannibal to finally pull back.

He kept Will cradled in his arms, looking down at him as silent tears rolled down his face.

“Will. My Will.”

“Hannibal,” Will croaked, unable to stop the tears from flowing even as he laughed.

Hannibal tore his eyes from Will to look around him, seeing the world anew. “There was an accident. The sleigh was destroyed. I remember now. I remember it all.” He cupped Will’s face as he looked back to him.

“Let me take you home.” Will placed his hands on Hannibal’s coat lapels and tugged them. “I have enough residual magic left, I can get us there.”

Hannibal chuckled and shook his head. “This is all so far fetched. How can I believe this? How can I believe that I’m actually the real Santa Klaus.”

At that Will let out a joyous laugh, tightening his grip on Hannibal. “You’re right it’s completely unbelievable, and not remotely true. Though you make a good Mall Santa.” Will teased, moving a hand up to tug lightly on Hannibal’s beard.

“The only red that was ever your colour was the blood of your enemies.” Will smiled. “Nicholas will be so happy to see you back. There has never been anyone quite like you, Hannibal. No one could ever replace you, Krampus.”

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